

Docket No. 0094.050

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:1-21. *(Cancelled)*

22. *(Currently Amended)* A method for fabricating a scratch-resistant imaging element having optical clarity, the method comprising

- dispersing a ceramic nanoparticle material in an aqueous solution of a film-forming hydrophilic colloid comprising gelatin, dextran, gum arabic, zein, casein, pectin, collagen derivatives, collodion, agar-agar, arrowroot, albumin, polyvinyl alcohol, polyacrylamide, poly(vinylpyrrolidone), or a mixture (hereof), to form a coating composition;
- applying the coating composition to a surface of a support-for-an imaging-element layer;
- drying the coated surface; and, optionally,
- aging the dried coated surface,

whereby an imaging-element-protective layer having both optical clarity and resistance to scratching is produced formed over the imaging layer.

23. *(New)* A method according to claim 22, wherein the coating composition comprises 25 - 99.9 parts by weight film-forming hydrophilic colloid; and 0.1 - 75 parts by weight ceramic nanoparticle material.

24. *(New)* A method according to claim 22, wherein the coating composition comprises 50 - 95 parts by weight film-forming hydrophilic colloid; and 5 - 50 parts by weight ceramic nanoparticle material.

25. *(New)* A method according to claim 22, wherein the coating composition comprises 70 - 90 parts by weight film-forming hydrophilic colloid; and 10 - 30 parts by weight ceramic nanoparticle material.

26. *(New)* A method according to claim 22, additionally comprising water.

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27. **(New)** A method according to claim 22, wherein the film-forming hydrophilic colloid comprises a gelatin.

28. **(New)** A method according to claim 22, wherein the ceramic nanoparticle material comprises one or more metal oxides.

29. **(New)** A method according to claim 28, wherein said one or more metal oxides are selected from the group consisting of titania and alumina.

30. **(New)** A method according to claim 28, wherein said one or more metal oxides are alumina.

31. **(New)** A method according to claim 22, wherein average particle size of the ceramic nanoparticle material ranges from 3 nm to 100 nm.

32. **(New)** A method according to claim 22, wherein average particle size of the ceramic nanoparticle material ranges from 5 nm to 50 nm.

33. **(New)** A method according to claim 22, wherein average particle size of the ceramic nanoparticle material ranges from 10 nm to 30 nm.

34. **(New)** A method according to claim 22, wherein maximum particle size of the ceramic nanoparticle material is 100 nm.